

# Maximising the impact of Scottish drugs research: from inception to publication

28<sup>th</sup> November 2018  
Grand Central Hotel  
Glasgow

## Conference report

### Introduction

On the 28th November 2018, the [Drugs Research Network Scotland \(DRNS\)](http://drns.ac.uk) were delighted to hold their first annual conference titled **Maximising the impact of Scottish drugs research: from inception to publication**. Supported by the [Society for the Study of Addiction](http://www.addiction.org.uk), the one-day conference was designed to help the Scottish drugs research community to produce more effective and impactful research. The day included a series of presentations and workshops, as well as academic posters authored by researchers from across the UK. The event was fully subscribed, and we hosted around 120 delegates including academic and peer researchers, Masters and PhD students, researchers from the NHS, third sector service providers, and people with lived/living experience of drug use.

This report provides a summary of the event. All conference outputs, including videos and slides from presentations, graphics and photographs are available on the DRNS website at [drns.ac.uk/conference2018](http://drns.ac.uk/conference2018)



## Conference programme

<b>09.15 – 09.45</b>	<b>Registration and refreshments</b>
MORNING PLENARY: Chaired by Dr Alison Munro, University of Dundee	
<b>09.45 – 10.00</b>	<b>Welcome</b> Prof. Catriona Matheson, DRNS Convenor
<b>10.00 – 10.30</b>	<b>Research into policy: some examples of success</b> Prof. Alex Stevens, University of Kent
<b>10.30 – 11.00</b>	<b>Getting good ideas into practice: how is implementation science useful for service improvement?</b> Prof. Tracy Finch, Northumbria University
<b>11.00 – 11.20</b>	<b>Poster presentations</b>
<b>11.20 – 11.45</b>	<b>Break</b>
WORKSHOP SESSIONS	
<b>11.45 – 12.45</b>	<b>A. Democratising drugs research? Navigating the evidence and building on people's experience to make it work for everyone</b> Jason Wallace, Scottish Drugs Forum Dr Gillian Tober, Leeds Addiction Unit Dr Tessa Parkes, University of Stirling
	<b>B. Preparing a strong grant application</b> Prof. Kate Hunt, University of Stirling
	<b>C. The power of large datasets and data linkage</b> Lee Barnsdale, NHS Information Services Division Suhail Iqbal, Administrative Data Research Centre
<b>12.45 – 13.45</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
AFTERNOON PLENARY: Chaired by Duncan Hill, NHS Lanarkshire	
<b>13.45 – 14.15</b>	<b>Getting published: A how-to guide</b> Prof. Betsy Thom, Middlesex University
<b>14.15 – 14.45</b>	<b>Using non-academic methods in knowledge exchange</b> Prof. Harry Sumnall, Liverpool John Moores University
<b>14.45 – 15.05</b>	<b>Poster presentations</b>
<b>15.05 – 15.30</b>	<b>Break</b>
WORKSHOP SESSIONS	
<b>15.30–16.30</b>	<b>D. Research ethics and governance in drugs research</b> Dr Anne Whittaker, University of Stirling
	<b>E. Communicating research effectively with policy makers</b> Carol Brown, Scottish Government
	<b>F. Research into policy and practice: Successful case studies from a clinical/practitioner perspective</b> Prof. Roy Robertson, University of Edinburgh David Liddell, Scottish Drugs Forum
<b>16.30 – 16.45</b>	<b>Closing notes</b> Joe Schofield, DRNS Coordinator

## Plenary presentations

### Research into policy: some examples of success

The first presentation of the day was given by [Professor Alex Stevens](#) from the University of Kent. During his presentation, Alex outlined power and morality as two main barriers in drug policy, and discussed four examples of how these barriers have been successfully overcome. Examples included HIV prevention and harm reduction, New Labour's expansion of opioid substitution treatment (OST) into English prisons, and development of medical cannabis in the UK. Alex finished his presentation with the following four lessons that we can learn from the successful examples:

- Appeal to shared interests in reducing harm.
- Present a threat to the 'in-group'.
- Create consequences for the powerful.
- Change the narrative.

Following from Alex's presentation, a short discussion covered topics including the puritan moralism that surrounds alcohol and drug policy, the compromises made between doctors and the Home Office, how to improve representation of people with lived/living experience of drug use in policy decisions, and the balance between facts and creating a narrative.



Getting good ideas into practice: how is implementation science useful for service improvement?

The final morning plenary presentation was given by [Professor Tracy Finch](#) from Northumbria University. Tracy began by defining implementation science and discussing the varied terminology, approaches, activities, and levels of analysis contained within. Tracy then discussed Normalisation Process Theory (NPT) which is a way of thinking about implementation problems that focuses on:

- how interventions can become part of everyday practice;
- how different groups of people need to work together to achieve it.

Using examples, Tracy ended her presentation by discussing how NPT can be used as a tool for planning and evaluating complex health interventions.

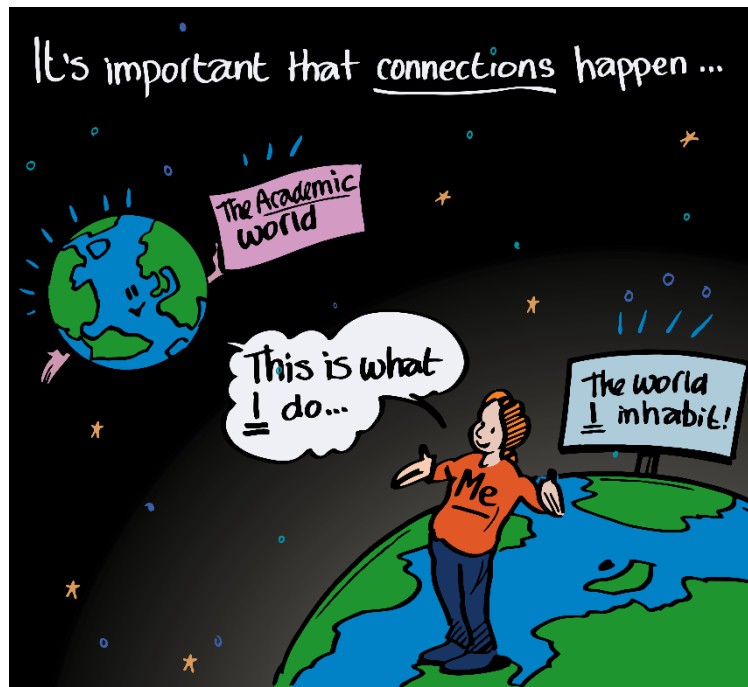
#### Getting published: A how-to guide

The first afternoon presentation was given by [Professor Betsy Thom](#) from Middlesex University. During her presentation, Betsy gave practical advice for researchers looking to get their work published. For example, advice was given on how to choose the most appropriate journal and avoid predatory publishing. Betsy then went on to discuss how to prepare your work for your chosen journal. This involved a frank discussion on how to navigate the common dilemma of authorship. Betsy also advised on how to delete unnecessary but much-loved sections of writing. To end her presentation, Betsy advised on how to respond to reviewer comments and start the revision process.



#### Using non-academic methods in knowledge exchange

The final presentation of the day was delivered by [Professor Harry Sumnall](#) from Liverpool John Moores University. Harry's presentation involved a discussion of how researchers in the substance use field can improve their public engagement to effectively transfer knowledge and impact on policy. Harry highlighted the need to go beyond publishing in journal articles to promote research. Importantly, high citation numbers do not guarantee that your research will reach the public or influence policy. Presenting a range of examples, Harry demonstrated how non-academic methods can be utilised effectively to improve knowledge exchange. Example methods included Twitter, Facebook, research podcasts, YouTube, and many more. Harry finished his talk by discussing recent examples in Scotland of campaigns that have successfully engaged with the public and Government, such as [#DontPinkMyDrink](#) by the Substance Misuse group at Glasgow Caledonian University.



## Workshop summaries

Democratising drugs research? Navigating the evidence and building on people's experience to make it work for everyone

This morning workshop was delivered by [Jason Wallace](#) (Scottish Drugs Forum), [Dr Gillian Tober](#) (Leeds Addiction Unit), and [Dr Tessa Parkes](#) (University of Stirling). During this workshop, the facilitators drew upon their own experiences to share insights and practices that can support the research involvement of people who use/d drugs and affected family members. The workshop involved a discussion of the underpinning values, ethics, and principles surrounding involvement, with the facilitators exploring different models of involvement and their associated benefits and challenges.

### Preparing a strong grant application

[Professor Kate Hunt](#), from the University of Stirling, led a one hour workshop that taught delegates how to prepare a strong grant application. Kate's key topics included finding out about your potential funder(s), building the case for your proposal, planning and writing your research design, considering the essential practicalities, submitting your application, and responding to referees.

### The power of large datasets and data linkage

The final morning workshop was facilitated by [Lee Barnsdale](#) (ISD Scotland) and Suhail Iqbal (Administrative Data Research Centre). Lee started the workshop by outlining key substance-use related data sources such as the Scottish Drug Misuse Database (SDMD) and the Prescribing Information System (PIS). Lee discussed multiple examples of how the ISD Scotland has been able to utilise data linkage and bring together multiple drug-related data sets from different organisations to produce new findings. Discussed topics included drug prevalence estimates, drug-related deaths, and older people with a drug problem. Suhail then proceeded to outline the eData Research and Innovation Service Team (eDRIS) which is a National Services Scotland (NSS) service that provides coordination and expert advice to support researchers wishing to work with health data. Presentation slides from the workshop can be accessed below:

## Research ethics and governance in drugs research

This afternoon workshop was delivered by [Dr Anne Whittaker](#) from the University of Stirling. During her workshop, Anne outlined key issues that require addressing when conducting drugs research, including participant safety, consent, and confidentiality. Anne discussed a range of different research populations and contexts and gave an overview of the ethical approval process. To close the workshop, Anne facilitated an interactive discussion of different research scenarios and their varying ethical considerations.

## Communicating research effectively with policy makers

This workshop was led by Carol Brown who is a Principal Social Researcher in Population Health at the Scottish Government. Carol started the workshop by shedding valuable insight into the background of policy making and role that research plays in this process. Carol then gave specific advice on how to write effectively for policy makers, which requires a different approach when compared to typical academic style. At the end of Carol's workshop, delegates separated into groups and critically discussed example posters and evaluated their effectiveness at communicating to policy makers.

## Research into practice: Successful case studies from a clinical/practitioner perspective

The final afternoon workshop was facilitated by [David Liddell](#) (Scottish Drugs Forum) and [Professor Roy Robertson](#) (University of Edinburgh). During this workshop, David and Roy drew from their extensive backgrounds in drug research and each presented two case studies demonstrating how drugs research has been put into practice. David and Roy discussed research surrounding older people with drug problems in Scotland, trauma and recovery amongst people who have injected drugs within the past five years, the Edinburgh Drug Cohort Study, and the Muirhouse Medical Group. Both workshop facilitators identified how the discussed research has influenced practice as demonstrated in government strategy, clinical practice guidelines, and the lives of people who use drugs.



## Posters

DRNS were delighted to welcome the following authors who each displayed a poster of their drug-related research during the conference. The posters were judged by [Dr Duncan Raistrick](#) who is the Co-Director of RESULT: a programme of research into outcome and process measures. Duncan has recently retired as Consultant Addiction Psychiatrist with Leeds Addiction Unit and has been involved in the addictions field since his psychiatric training which he completed in 1979.

We would like to congratulate [Karen Black](#) from the University of the West of Scotland who was awarded the prize for the best poster.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Poster Title</b>
April Shaw	University of Glasgow	Using Object Elicitation Methods in Qualitative Interviews
Emma Hamilton	Scottish Drugs Forum	Developing a theory of social isolation and loneliness in a cohort of older male drug users.
Emma Hamilton	Scottish Drugs Forum	A Mixed Method Evaluation of NHS Tayside's Injecting Equipment Provision Services
Hannah Carver	The Salvation Army Centre for Addiction Services and Research, University of Stirling	Perspectives of problem substance use treatment from those experiencing homelessness: Key components and missing voices
Karen Black	University of the West of Scotland	Alternative Voices of Recovery: Exploring the meaning of recovery for people on methadone treatment
Karen Dunleavy	University of the West of Scotland	Spore forming bacterial infections and people who inject drugs: Implications for harm reduction
Louise Marryat	University of Edinburgh	Stakeholder perspectives of the successes and failures of drug harm reduction policy in Scotland
Mathew Smith	Glasgow Caledonian University	Pre-exposure prophylaxis for people who inject drugs: results from an exploratory study carried out during an ongoing HIV outbreak in Glasgow, Scotland
Paul Rogon	Scottish Children's Reporter Administration & Glasgow Caledonian University	Exploring the multidimensional nature of the use of substances by young people and the associated problematic consequences.
Peter Hillen	Edinburgh Napier University	The role of personal spiritual rituals among individuals in recovery from problematic substance use: implications for drug and alcohol workers.
Rachel Barry	University of Edinburgh	Understanding cannabis policy change in Uruguay: Towards policy coherence?
Rebecca Foster	University of Stirling	Supporting harm reduction through peer support (SHARPS): Testing the feasibility and acceptability of a peer-delivered, relational intervention for people with problem substance use who are homeless,

Name	Organisation	Poster Title
		to improve health outcomes, quality of life and social functioning, and reduce harms
Tony Knox	University of Birmingham	Psychosocial Factors Influencing the Harmful Use of PIED in Sport and Exercise
Tracey Price	University of Stirling	An Exploration of Scotland's Early Interventions and Diversions

We would like to thank Paul Rogon, Karen Black, Tony Knox, Emma Hamilton, Karen Dunleavy, and Tracey Price who each delivered a short presentation of their work during the conference plenary sessions.



## Feedback

We are grateful to delegates who took the time to complete our post-event feedback form. It was great to read your positive comments and thoughtful suggestions for future DRNS conferences. Positive feedback generally focussed on the following:

- the relaxed and friendly atmosphere that facilitated networking opportunities with peers and other professionals in the field;
- the chance to hear research findings from students and early career researchers;
- the breadth and quality of the topics covered which accommodated for people with varying interests and backgrounds.

Common suggestions for future DRNS conferences included the following:

- smaller sized workshops to allow for more interactive and discussion-based activities;
- more time allocated for poster viewing;
- a greater focus on research findings and emerging research;
- additional events tailored towards development of early career and peer researchers.

All feedback received is being used to inform future events.



## Acknowledgments

We would like to offer our sincere thanks to all our speakers, workshop facilitators, and poster authors for sharing their knowledge and experiences on the day. For helping us to capture the conference content, we are grateful to our video recorder and editor [Alex Dunedin](#); our photographer [Lenny Warren](#); and our graphic illustrator [Graham Ogilvie](#).

Thanks also go to the [Society for the Study of Addiction](#) for supporting the event and, last but not least, we would like to thank all of our delegates for attending our first conference and making the event a success through their attendance, networking and contributions.



## Delegate list

At the time of booking, all delegates were asked to indicate if they consented for their details to be included in the conference report. This delegate list includes details of those who gave opt-in permission and who provided full contact details.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Company</b>	
Laura	Adnum	Researcher (Drink Wise Age Well evaluator)	Glasgow Caledonian University
Martin	Anderson	Postgraduate Researcher (PhD)	University of Glasgow
Rowan	Anderson	Partnership Drugs Initiative Manager	Corra Foundation
Sarah	Anderson	Lecturer in Criminology	University of the West of Scotland
Liz	Aston	Director, SIPR	Edinburgh Napier University
Angus	Bancroft		University of Edinburgh
Lee	Barnsdale	Principal Information Analyst	NHS Information Services Division
Rachel	Barry	PhD Student	University of Edinburgh
Paul	Baxter	Peer Research Volunteer	Scottish Drugs Forum
Karen	Black	Citizenship Development Co-ordinator	Turning Point Scotland
Anna	Brewster		Glasgow Caledonian University
Carol	Brown	Principal Research Officer	Scottish Government
Mark	Burgess		Scottish Government
John	Burns	PhD Student	University of Stirling
Zoe	Carre	Policy Researcher	Release
Hannah	Carver	Knowledge Exchange Fellow	University of Stirling
Eric	Chen	Researcher	NHS Lothian
Zoe	Clarke	Project Worker/Researcher	Health Opportunities Team
Jessica	Cleary	Doctoral Student	University of Stirling
Marcus	Cusack	Knowledge Exchange Assistant	University of Stirling
Fiona	Cuthill	Lecturer in Nursing Studies	University of Edinburgh
Elinor	Dickie		NHS National Services Scotland
Sarah	Donaldson	Specialist Pharmacist in Substance Misuse	NHS Tayside
Gill	Donnan	Service Manager	Addaction
Alex	Dunedin	Director	Ragged University
Karen	Dunleavy	Research Fellow	University of the West of Scotland
Fraser	Edmonston		Scottish Drug Forum
Tracy	Finch	Professor of Healthcare & Implementation Science	Northumbria University
Rebecca	Foster		University of Stirling
Maria	Fotopoulou	Lecturer in Criminology	University of Stirling
Nick	Fuller	PhD Student	University of Stirling
Wayne	Gault	ADP Lead Officer	NHS Grampian & Aberdeenshire ADP
Jennifer	Goff	Communications & Research Officer	Waverley Care
Jean	Gonzalez	Peer Researcher	SDF Scottish Drugs Forum
Rebecca	Hamer	Doctoral Researcher	CRESR, Sheffield Hallam
Janet	Hamil	Lecturer	University of Stirling
Emma	Hamilton	Head of Inclusion and Peer Engagement	Scottish Drugs Forum
Gordon	Hay	Reader in Social Epidemiology	Liverpool John Moores University
Lisa	Hendry	Outcomes Development and Information Manager	Turning Point Scotland
April	Henning	Lecturer	University of Stirling
Duncan	Hill	Specialist Pharmacist in Substance Misuse	NHS Lanarkshire

<b>Name</b>		<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Company</b>
Peter	Hillen	Research Fellow	Edinburgh Napier University
Thea	House	DRNS administrative assistant	DRNS
Kate	Hunt	Professor in Behavioural Sciences and Health	University of Stirling
Elizabeth	Hurst	Policy & Comms officer	Mentor UK
Dimitar	Karadzhov	PhD Student	University of Strathclyde
Garry	Kennedy	Information Analyst	South Lanarkshire ADP
Morag	Kiltpatrick	Peer Research Volunteer	Scottish Drugs Forum
Tony	Knox	PhD Candidate	University of Birmingham
Jaroslaw	Lang	Information Analyst	NHS ISD
Lainie	Lawson	Hepatology Specialist Nurse	NHS
Penelope	Laycock	Student	University of Strathclyde
David	Liddell	CEO	Scottish Drugs Forum
Katherine	Long	Partnership Drugs Initiative: Research Intern	Corra Foundation
Leslie	MacKay	team leader (addictions)	Argyll + Bute Addictions Team
Scott	Macpherson	Lecturer	Robert Gordon University
Andriana	Manta	PhD student	University of Stirling
Louise	Marryat	Research Fellow	University of Edinburgh
Wendy	Masterton	PhD researcher	University of Stirling
Catriona	Matheson	Convenor	Drugs Research Network Scotland
Kareena	McAloney-Kocaman	Lecturer	Glasgow Caledonian University
Andrew	McAuley	Senior Research Fellow	Glasgow Caledonian University
Susie	McClue	Connecting Families Development Officer	Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs
Amy	McEwan	Researcher	Glasgow Caledonian University
Tracey	McFall	Strategic Lead and Implementation Manager	Turning Point Scotland
Jodie	McGarry		Glasgow Caledonian University
Peter	McLachlan	Assistant Director	Simon Community Scotland
Tracey	McQuillan	PhD Student	University of Stirling
Heather	McVeigh	Director	Mentor UK
Kelly	Moran	Support Practitioner	Turning Point
Alison	Munro	Post-Doctoral Research Fellow	University of Dundee
Mary	Munro	Mental Health Lecturer	Robert Gordon University
Justina	Murray	CEO	Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs
Anne	Ndlozi	Information, Research & Performance Officer	Argyll & Bute Alcohol & Drug Partnership
Joyce	Nicholson	Lecturer	University of Glasgow
Stewart	Nixon	Assistant Director	Simon Community Scotland
Aileen	O'Gorman	Senior Lecturer	University of the West of Scotland
Faith	Ougham	student	University of Stirling
Sofia	Paci	PhD student	The University of Edinburgh
Maggie	Page		Scottish Government
Tessa	Parkes	Director	Salvation Army Centre for Addiction Services and Research
Christiane	Pflanz-Sinclair	PhD Student	University of Aberdeen
Duncan	Raistrick	Consultant Addiction Psychiatrist	NHS
Jenny	Revel	Mental Health Research Nurse	NRS Mental Health Network
Lisa	Rigby	Drop In Services Coordinator	Crew
Roy	Robertson	General Medical Practitioner and academic	Edinburgh University

<b>Name</b>		<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Company</b>
Paul	Rogon	Research Officer	Scottish Children's Reporter Administration & Glasgow Caledonian University
Andrew	Rome	Doctoral Researcher	University of Stirling
Anna	Ross	Convener	The Scottish Drug Policy Conversations
Lynda	Russell	Principal Clinical Psychologist	NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
Joe	Schofield	Research Coordinator	Drugs Research Network Scotland
Steve	Sharman	Research Fellow	University of East London
April	Shaw	PhD Candidate	University of Glasgow
Kathryn	Skivington		University of Glasgow
Matt	Smith	Researcher	Glasgow Caledonian University
Mike	Smith	Information Analyst	NHS ISD
Alex	Stevens		University of Kent
Debbie	Stewart	HADP Coordinator	Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
Harry	Sumnall	Professor in Substance Use	Liverpool John Moores University
Zoe	Swithenbank	Research Assistant	University of Aberdeen
Betsy	Thom	Prof of Health Policy	Middlesex University
Carol	Thomson	Peer researcher	Scottish Drugs Forum
Gillian	Tober	Consultant Addiction Psychologist (retired)	Leeds Addiction Unit
Patricia	Tracey	Service Manager	Turning Point Scotland
Kirsten	Trayner	Researcher	Glasgow Caledonian University
Jason	Wallace	Senior Development Officer Volunteering and Engage	Scottish Drugs Forum
Nicole	Walsh	PhD Student	Edinburgh Napier University
Leanne	Watson	Volunteer peer support	Turning point Scotland
Jeanann	Webster	Assistant Director	Simon Community Scotland
Kira	Weir	Emerging Trends and Training Coordinator	Crew
Susan	Weir	Senior Officer, National Quality Development Team	Scottish Drugs Forum
Anne	Whittaker	Associate Professor	NMAHP Research Unit
Hector	Williams	Senior Research Fellow	Robert Gordon University
Barbara	Zaman	Senior Officer, National Quality Development Team	Scottish Drugs Forum